
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

KELOWNA AND VERNON HOSPITAL EXPANSION GETS GREEN LIGHT

KELOWNA – Government has approved major expansion plans for Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) and Vernon Jubilee Hospital (VJH), announced Health Minister George Abbott.

“Our investment will expand and modernize Kelowna General Hospital and Vernon Jubilee Hospital to ensure the delivery of world-class care in the years ahead,” said Abbott. “The new outpatient hospital and quadrupled emergency department in Kelowna and the new diagnostic and treatment building in Vernon represents the largest single investment in the health system in the Interior.”

Expansion plans include a new approximately 187,000-square-foot outpatient hospital in addition to modernizing and quadrupling the size of the emergency department from 7,000 to 30,000 square feet at KGH and a new approximately 135,000-square-foot diagnostic and treatment building at VJH. Construction is expected to commence in 2008 with completion targeted for 2010. The two projects will be developed under a single project management structure.

“Interior Health’s vision of setting new standards of excellence in the delivery of health services in B.C. requires an assertive plan for the future anticipating demand and delivering infrastructure and services to support growth and change,” said Interior Health Board chair Alan Dolman. “The project forms a cornerstone for the expansion of services at our main acute site, Kelowna General Hospital, and provides the first step in renewal and expansion of a key acute site in Vernon. We are very pleased to be moving forward with these projects.”

The new purpose-built, multi-storey outpatient hospital and expansion of the emergency department at KGH are key to the Central Okanagan redevelopment plan. Existing outpatient services will be relocated to the new hospital and will free up space to physically expand the emergency department and other acute services. An outpatient hospital provides health services for patients who do not need to stay overnight. Services include day surgery treatment, rehabilitation and diagnostic procedures such as X-rays. The outpatient hospital will include shelled space to accommodate the planned University of British Columbia medical school expansion at KGH.

The Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District has agreed to provide 40 per cent of the capital funding for the KGH project with the remainder of funding provided by the government of British Columbia through Interior Health.

“We’re pleased to contribute to the expansion of Kelowna General Hospital,” said Robert Hobson, chair of the Central Okanagan Regional Hospital District. “This welcomed project will have a significant impact on how health-care services are delivered to residents throughout our region.”

The proposed multi-storey diagnostic and treatment building at VJH will be situated adjacent to the existing building on the southeast corner of the VJH site. The new building will include: an expanded emergency department, outpatient centre, surgical services, intensive care/cardiac care and central sterilization services. The North Okanagan/Columbia Shuswap Regional Hospital District (NOCSRHD) will contribute 40 per cent of the capital funding for this project with the government of British Columbia, through Interior Health, funding the remainder.

“We’re very supportive of this project and thrilled to see it moving forward,” said Rhona Martin, chair of NOCSRHD. “This new diagnostic and treatment building will be a great benefit for our North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap residents.”

The KGH and VJH projects will be pursued as a single public-private partnership. All health services will be funded and provided by the public sector through IHA, in keeping with the Canada Health Act. As a next step, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be posted on BC Bid by Interior Health. RFQs are used to invite private consortiums to participate in the design, construction, financing and maintenance of the major expansion projects at VJH and KGH.

The initial cost of the project is estimated to be \$200 million. The KGH expansion is estimated to cost \$119 million, while the Vernon Jubilee Hospital expansion is estimated to be \$81 million. However, the final cost of the overall project is dependent on the bids that are submitted as result of the Request for Proposal process and the market conditions throughout the competitive selection process. The Province will be contributing \$120 million for the project, with the remainder identified in the regional hospital districts capital plans.

At the same time Minister Abbott was announcing approved capital funding for Kelowna General Hospital and Vernon Jubilee, Premier Campbell announced approved funding for a new 320,000-square-foot Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. The initial cost of the Royal Jubilee Hospital project is estimated to be \$269 million.

Interior Health will use the criteria provided in the RFQ to select entities to be invited to submit proposals at the Request for Proposal stage, expected in summer 2007.

The expansion of KGH is part of the Central Okanagan redevelopment plan – which could include a future redevelopment of the surgical suite, surgical inpatient beds and adult psychiatry, and potentially an open heart surgery program. Interior Health expects to begin planning for future expansion at KGH as well as proceeding with land acquisition, planning and design of the Westside Community Health Centre.

Previous components of the KGH redevelopment include the new \$5.3-million Adolescent Psychiatry Unit, which opened on the fifth floor of the Royal building in 2005, 248 net new residential care beds and assisted living units in the Central Okanagan since 2001 and a new \$8-million parkade on the southwest corner, which opened in fall 2006. Construction of the parkade was needed to allow for the relocation of visitor parking which is necessary to free up the space for the construction of the new outpatient hospital. Also underway is the redesign of the neonatal unit at KGH to enhance facilities for newborns and their families, and construction will begin in June on a new 24-bed Central Okanagan Hospice Centre on Ethel Street.

2 backgrounder(s) attached.

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